

# **New Hampshire 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers Evaluation Framework**

## **Summary of Findings from the 2011-12 School Year**

**Prepared by Policy Studies Associates, Inc.**

During the 2011-12 school year, the New Hampshire Department of Education (NHDOE) worked with Policy Studies Associates (PSA) to develop and implement a comprehensive statewide evaluation framework for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) program, with support from the Mott Foundation. In general, PSA had lead responsibility for developing the content of the data collection instruments and for analysis and reporting, with input from the NHDOE, 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC directors, and an evaluation advisory group. The NHDOE had lead responsibility for creating data platforms to support the evaluation framework and for collecting data, with consultation from PSA.

## **Overview of the Evaluation Framework**

The 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program is a federal grant program administered by the NHDOE, with centers operated by local education agencies and community-based organizations during the out-of-school time hours. Each center is expected to offer at least 15 hours of high-quality, enrichment opportunities each week, with these opportunities designed to complement school-day learning. The goal of 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programming in New Hampshire is to support student learning and promote positive youth development by offering safe environments that encourage positive youth-adult relationships and complement the school day. This goal is consistent with research that suggests that afterschool programs can benefit youth academically and socially, particularly when programs are connected to the school day and developmentally appropriate (Little, Wimer, & Weiss, 2008; Miller, 2005).

The evaluation framework is intended to guide the ongoing performance-management strategy for the New Hampshire 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program and is grounded in a research-based logic model for the program. The logic model first identifies key inputs that support the implementation of high-quality afterschool programs. These include supports from the NHDOE and other funding agencies, the capacity of program staff, the presence of meaningful partnerships, and the use of data to inform program development. The logic model then identifies important components of program implementation, including a caring, safe, and youth-directed environment, and developmentally appropriate, skill-oriented activities that reflect school-day standards. The presence of these components is anticipated to lead to high levels of student engagement and satisfaction with the program. These factors in turn contribute to the academic and life skills outcomes targeted by the New Hampshire 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program, including strong engagement in learning and school performance, and the development of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.

NHDOE built on existing state data systems to develop innovative approaches for collecting comprehensive data aligned with the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC evaluation framework, with consultation from PSA. The data collection mechanisms developed by the NHDOE permit an exceptional level of data collection and analysis. In particular, because online survey administration platforms for the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC evaluation were developed within existing NHDOE data systems, the data collected can be linked across sources at both the school level and at the individual student level. This capability permits analysis of the associations between measures of 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program implementation and measures of student engagement and outcomes.

The evaluation framework incorporates data from the following sources:

- ***Student surveys.*** An online survey is administered annually to students in grades 3 and higher who participate in 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs. The survey addresses students' program satisfaction, engagement in learning, and perceived benefits of participating in the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program. There are two versions of the survey, one geared toward younger students and one for older students. Survey responses can be linked to students' educational performance and to 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program participation data.
- ***Program director survey.*** An online survey is administered annually to all 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program directors who oversee one or more 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs. This survey asks program directors to report on a range of topics related to program inputs, including supports received, coordination with districts and schools, and sustainability.
- ***Site director survey.*** An online survey is administered annually to the on-site directors who manage the day-to-day operations of each 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC. This survey asks site directors to report on program operations and planning, program activity schedules and content, and professional development.
- ***Principal survey.*** Principals of schools hosting 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs are annually invited to complete a brief online survey. This survey asks principals about their goals for the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC, their expectations for youth outcomes, the alignment of the program with school-day learning objectives, and the perceived value-added of the program to the school.
- ***21<sup>st</sup> CCLC participation data.*** Student-level 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program enrollment and attendance data are captured in the Youth Services data system and are used to measure the level of student engagement in the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program.
- ***School performance data.*** School-day attendance and achievement data maintained in NHDOE's i4see system can be linked at the student level to 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC participation data and survey data.
- ***Teacher survey data.*** The teacher survey is administered annually and provides information on the educational performance of students who participate regularly in 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs.

This summary highlights findings from the New Hampshire 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC evaluation during the 2011-12 school year. Where appropriate, comparisons are made to national 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC findings as reported to the U.S. Department of Education for 2009-10, the most recent year available (U.S. Department of Education, 2011).

## 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Program Enrollment and Engagement

During the 2011-12 school year, the NHDOE funded 68 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs through 23 grants. These programs enrolled a total of 8,445 students in kindergarten through grade 12. The number of students enrolled in each center ranged from 27 to 387, with a mean of 133 students.

**Student characteristics.** 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs are intended to support the educational and social development of at-risk students. The evaluation examined the educational and demographic characteristics of students enrolled in 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs in New Hampshire to describe the student population served. The majority of students served were in elementary or middle school. Fifty-six percent of enrolled students were in grades K-5, 34 percent were in grades 6-8, and 10 percent were in grades 9-12.

Exhibits 1 and 2 summarize the demographic and educational characteristics of 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC participants in New Hampshire. Students who participated in the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program had high rates of school attendance during the 2011-12 school year. On average, 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC participants attended 163 days of school, with average school attendance rates for 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC participants ranging across schools from an average of 147 school days to 174 school days.

**Exhibit 1**  
**Characteristics of New Hampshire 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC participants, 2011-12, in percents**  
(*n*=8,445)

Participant characteristic	Percent
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	50%
Female	50
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>	
White	77
Black	5
Asian	3
Hispanic	11
Asian Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian	0
Alaskan Native or American Indian	1
Multiracial	3
<b>Free or reduced price lunch status</b>	
Eligible	55
Not eligible	45

**Exhibit 1**  
**Characteristics of New Hampshire 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC participants, 2011-12, in percents**  
**(continued)**  
*(n=8,445)*

Participant characteristic	Percent
<b>Special education status</b>	
Eligible	16%
Not eligible	84
<b>English language proficiency status</b>	
Proficient	93
Limited English proficient	8

Exhibit reads: Fifty percent of 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC participants in New Hampshire were male, and 50 percent were female.

**Exhibit 2**  
**Fall 2011 NECAP results for New Hampshire 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC participants, in percents**

Performance levels	Below Proficient Level 1	Partially Proficient Level 2	Proficient Level 3	Proficient w/ Distinction Level 4
Reading (n=5,476)	11%	21%	53%	15%
Math (n=5,494)	20	20	43	17

Exhibit reads: Eleven percent of New Hampshire 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC participants scored at Level 1 (Below Proficient) on the reading NECAP in fall 2011.

**21<sup>st</sup> CCLC participation rates.** High-quality 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs can be expected to demonstrate high levels of student engagement and, ultimately, positive student outcomes. In the national evaluation of the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program, findings affirm that students who spend more time in 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs show greater improvement than those who attend less. For example, students attending 90 or more days showed more improvement on the state mathematics assessment than did students attending the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program fewer than 90 days, and students attending 60 to 89 days showed more improvement than did those attending 30 to 59 days (U.S. Department of Education, 2011).

Across all 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs in New Hampshire, 54 percent of participants attended the program for 30 days or more in 2011-12, classifying them as “regular attendees” according to the federal definitions. This rate of participation was similar to that reported nationally across 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs. In 2009-10, 49 percent of students enrolled in 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programming nationwide were classified as “regular attendees.”

In New Hampshire younger students were more likely to have high rates of 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC participation than were older students, as shown in Exhibit 3. This variation in participation by grade reflects patterns seen nationally, where grades 2 through 6 each accounted for more than 10 percent of all regular attendees (30 or more days) and grades 9 through 12 each accounted for about 4 percent of all regular attendees.

**Exhibit 3**  
**Patterns of 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC participation, by grade level**  
*(n=8,445)*

Percent of students attending....					
Grade level	21 <sup>st</sup> CCLC program	1 to 29 days	30 to 59 days	60 to 89 days	90+ days
K-5	56%	37%	16%	13%	34%
6-8	34	50	17	11	22
9-12	10	89	9	1	1

Exhibit reads: Fifty-six percent of all students enrolled in the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program in New Hampshire were in grades K-5. Thirty-seven percent of these students in grades K-5 attended the program between 1 and 29 days. Sixteen percent attended between 30 and 59 days.

## 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Program Implementation in 2011-12

Research has shown that afterschool programs that offer not only activities focusing on intentional skill-building and mastery attainment but also youth-centered programming with developmentally appropriate activities can contribute to positive outcomes for students (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007; Eccles & Gootman, 2002; McLaughlin, 2000; Noam, 2008; Vandell et al., 2006). The evaluation collected data on the extent to which the New Hampshire 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs implemented best practices, including creating caring, safe, and youth-directed environments, and provided developmentally appropriate, skill-oriented activities that reflect school-day standards. Overall, findings indicate that in 2011-12, the New Hampshire 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs offered enriching learning opportunities that complemented the school day and supported student learning.

**Staff qualifications.** Nationally, 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program activities are typically staffed by school-day staff members, with 45 percent of 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC paid staff composed of school-day teachers and an additional 13 percent of 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC staff composed of non-teaching school staff. On average, 41 percent of 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC staff members in New Hampshire were certified teachers, and 24 percent were school aides or paraprofessionals.

**School partnerships.** A strong, viable relationship between host schools and 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs lays the foundation for 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program staff to work collaboratively with school leaders to recruit students in need of additional supports and to design program activities that support the academic and developmental needs of students. In New Hampshire, both school leaders and 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program leaders reported strong partnerships. Almost all principals (97 percent) reported that the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC enhanced the overall effectiveness of the school at least to some extent, and that the program reinforced the school-day curriculum (91 percent). Sixty-nine percent of principals reported that the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC's activities were aligned with the Common Core State Standards.

**Access to data.** The strong relationship between schools and 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs was reflected in a high level of data sharing. Seventeen of 22 program directors reported that 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC staff at all

the schools they supervise have timely access to data about student demographics and school performance. Most commonly, principals reported sharing school-day student attendance records (86 percent of principals said their school shared this information with the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC), student grades in school (81 percent), and school-day student behavior records (78 percent). About three-quarters of principals reported that their school shares student achievement test scores with 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program staff (73 percent).

***Program environment.*** The majority of 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC participants responded positively to questions about the program environment. For instance, most students reported feeling safe in the program most or all of the time (89 percent) and that adults treated them with respect most or all of the time (88 percent). 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs also contributed to improved school climates. Almost all principals surveyed reported that the program improves students' behavior (95 percent of principals said this was true to at least some extent), school safety (93 percent), and school day attendance (89 percent).

***Program activities.*** 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs offered enrichment opportunities to support students academically and socially. More than three-quarters of 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs offered the following activities at least weekly:

- Academic enrichment learning programs (e.g., hands-on activities) (reported by 100 percent of site directors)
- Group homework help or tutoring (98 percent)
- Sports and physical fitness activities (96 percent)
- Arts, music, and theater education activities (93 percent)
- One-on-one tutoring or academic assistance (82 percent)
- Nutrition and health awareness (82 percent)
- Telecommunications and technology activities (82 percent)

Site directors operating 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs serving high school students regularly offered activities appropriate for older students. For example, on a weekly basis, all five responding high school site directors offered telecommunications and technology activities, four offered community service activities, and three offered life skills and youth leadership activities. Two of the five CCLCs serving high school students offered college and career education activities on a weekly basis, and the other three offered those activities at least a few times a year.

## **Student Outcomes**

An evaluation meta-analysis found that youth development programs that offer mastery-focused and skill-based learning opportunities skills contribute to positive learning outcomes (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007). The evaluation framework for the New Hampshire 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program is grounded in the theory that strong program inputs, high-quality implementation of supportive, skill-based programming, and high levels of student participation will contribute to the academic and life skills outcomes targeted by the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program, including engagement in learning and school performance, and the development of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, including resilience and positive relationships.

In this first year of the New Hampshire 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC evaluation framework, outcome measures based on school performance data are not yet available, because of the timing of the availability of state performance data that measure year-end performance. In future years, the evaluation will examine the improvement in performance for 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC participants. Therefore, this analysis of student outcomes is based primarily on student survey reports and on teacher surveys collected for the national 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC data collection efforts.

***Academic outcomes.*** Students who participated in 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs reported being motivated to do well in school. Seventy-eight percent said that they always want to do well in school, and 74 percent reported that they always try hard to get good grades in school. However, fewer than half of students reported that they always get good grades in school (46 percent) or do well on tests (46 percent), and 35 percent reported that they always understand how to do their homework, suggesting a need for the types of supports that 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs can provide. Data indicate that 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs provided valued resources to students: 55 percent of students reported that they always get the help they need with their homework in the program.

Almost all principals reported that 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs enhance students' attitude toward school (98 percent reported this to at least some extent) and motivation to learn (93 percent). Most principals also reported that the programs contribute to improved literacy skills (90 percent), math skills (86 percent), and other academic content areas (91 percent). School-day teachers reported improvements in completing homework for 64 percent of students who participated regularly in the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program and in class participation for 60 percent.

***Life skills outcomes.*** Students who participated in 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs in middle schools and high schools expressed fairly high levels of confidence in certain 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, particularly the use of technology. For example, 66 percent always felt comfortable using the Internet to do research. Across all grade levels, almost all principals felt that programs contributed to improvements in students' health and well being (97 percent reported improvements at least to some extent). Principals were also positive about the impact of 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs on the social development of participating students, reporting that the program enhanced students' social skills (97 percent). Forty-six percent of teachers in New Hampshire reported improvements in student behavior for students who attended 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs regularly.

Programs also addressed other important 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. Survey findings indicate that these are areas in which 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs can continue to contribute to student development and intentionally work to help students develop important 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, including goal-setting and financial awareness. For instance, 23 percent of middle school and high school students said that they always achieve goals they set for themselves, and 36 percent reported that they always try things that appear hard to do. In addition, evaluation data point to an opportunity for 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs to play an important role in promoting college and career readiness. Survey responses suggested that 21 CCLCs could play a greater role in helping high school students prepare for college. For example, only 40 percent of students said that they always understand the credit and course requirements to graduate from high school. Forty-nine percent reported that the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC had helped them become more aware of different jobs and careers.

## Factors Associated with Student Engagement and Outcomes

The New Hampshire 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC evaluation framework was designed to allow the evaluation to test for associations between student baseline academic performance (as measured by NECAP scores) and reports of the program environment, level of program engagement, and academic and life skills outcomes (as measured by program participation data and by survey data). At the school level, the evaluation tested for associations between site director reports of program implementation (as measured by survey responses), 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC enrollment and attendance, and average student reports of program experiences.

The findings below highlight correlations that were statistically significant at the  $p < 0.05$  level, indicating that there was less than a 5 percent chance that the finding was due to chance, and which showed a meaningful strength of association. In particular, this report highlights the findings with strength of  $r_s^2 \geq 0.09$ , which is considered to be a low but meaningful level of association. Associations of between 0.25 and 0.48 are considered to be of moderate strength.

***Associations between implementation and student experience.*** Analysis found significant correlations between the level of implementation of skill-oriented activities (as reported by site directors) and student reports of certain aspects of the quality of program environments and of their experiences in programs. In 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs where site directors reported a higher frequency of activities that required program participants to engage in activities that required collaboration and progressive skills development, students were more likely to report:

- Positive interactions with program staff ( $r_s^2 = .13$ ,  $p < 0.05$ )
- High levels of engagement in learning ( $r_s^2 = 0.12$ ,  $p < 0.05$ )
- Positive student interactions in the program ( $r_s^2 = 0.10$ ,  $p < 0.05$ )
- Satisfaction with the program ( $r_s^2 = .09$ ,  $p < 0.05$ )

***Associations between implementation and student experience.*** Analysis also found positive and significant associations between levels of student satisfaction in the program and student reports of other program experiences and outcomes. The higher strength of association here is likely due in part to the fact that both data on satisfaction and on student experiences are from the same respondents (students), rather than from different data sources. In particular, higher student satisfaction with the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC was associated with:

- Positive interactions with program staff ( $r_s^2 = .49$ ,  $p < 0.05$ )
- Youth voice ( $r_s^2 = .33$ ,  $p < 0.05$ )
- Positive student interactions in the program ( $r_s^2 = .31$ ,  $p < 0.05$ )
- Persistence and resilience ( $r_s^2 = .25$ ,  $p < 0.05$ )
- 21<sup>st</sup> century skills ( $r_s^2 = .24$ ,  $p < 0.05$ )
- Engagement in learning ( $r_s^2 = .22$ ,  $p < 0.05$ )
- Student reports of their school performance ( $r_s^2 = .15$ ,  $p < 0.05$ )
- College readiness ( $r^2 = .09$ ,  $p < 0.05$ )



In addition, students were more likely to report positive interactions with other students in programs where the site director reported a better relationship between the program and the school ( $r_s^2=.12$ ,  $p=0.01$ ).

## Lessons Learned

Data collected in 2011-12 revealed many strengths of the New Hampshire 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program, including effective partnerships with schools and high levels of student satisfaction. Findings also pointed to areas in which 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs, with support from the state program office, can further improve their capacity to contribute to student development and academic success. These include:

- Site directors who manage the day-to-day operations of 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs could benefit from additional guidance on the targeted goals and expectations for program content. Promoting greater participation in content-specific technical assistance would ensure that 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs are aligned with state goals for 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs.
- 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs benefit from strong partnerships with schools, and school principals value the role that the programs play in their school. As the Common Core State Standards become increasingly established within the schools, developing 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program content to align to those standards will enhance the role of 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs in supporting student learning.
- Overall, students reported that 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs offer them a safe and welcoming environment, and that they generally felt supported and respected by the adult staff. However, programs could take added steps to further enhance the positive program environment by increasing opportunities for youth voice and leadership.
- 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC activities that are skill-focused should be further promoted, especially in light of the evaluation finding that in New Hampshire 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs implementing high levels of skill-oriented activities, participating students reported higher levels of engagement in learning, greater satisfaction with the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC, and more positive interactions with both program staff and students, compared to other 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs with a lesser focus on skill-building activities.
- More opportunities for high school students to develop 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and to participate in college and career readiness activities may not only increase the engagement of these older students in 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs but also provide them with important supports for adulthood.
- Encouraging increased levels of student participation in 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs, so that more students attend for 90 days or more throughout the school year, could strengthen its impact on student outcomes. This is especially true for high school students, who are attending New Hampshire 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs at lower rates than reported nationally.

- In future years, the evaluation framework will permit additional analysis of data at the local level to help individual 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs assess the degree to which they are meeting established benchmarks for high-quality program implementation, student engagement, and student outcomes. 21<sup>st</sup> CCLCs will benefit from this continued guidance so that they can better determine how to use available data to identify the needs and progress of participating students and to develop program content that meets those needs.

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